The Whistling Swan

HUBERT REDD sat staring at the piano in his mother's home. A chromo of St. Cecilia—face upturned toward a cluster of angels, unsuitable tapering hands on the keyboard of an invisible instrument—had always hung above it. It was an upright of Western make, the varnish slightly blistered long ago, the middle C and G below it chipped; no new damage had been done while he had been abroad. Probably it had not even been touched; his mother had kept it in tune, she said, because she had faith in her boy and knew that one fine day he would come home. In his childhood, after dark when the chores were done, he had sometimes cried because milking made his fingers too stiff to play and because he was too young to be taken seriously, with a poor father who could not be-

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lieve that a living might be made by music, in a country where the piano was thought suitable only to unmarried women; then he had been consoled by the romantic tears which fell directly on the keys if he held his head at a certain angle, and had memorized his first piece in order to be able to play when the notes melted and drew off in that distress which resembled a light, swirling cloud.

That was in another part of the state, before his parents had come north in search of prosperity. After his grandfather's lumberyards in Prospect, a suburb of Milwaukee, had been sold in order to divide the inheritance among four brothers, his father had tried farming, unsuccessfully, and later had moved to this lumbering town, Woodland, hoping to profit by his early experience. That also had been a disappointment; having invested all he had in a sawmill, he was now employed as a sort of foreman by the larger mill which had driven it into bankruptcy; the

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mother had explained their misfortune to her son.

Hubert had returned from Europe because the allowance a Chicago banker had been sending him had been discontinued. He was not sure that his parents would have helped him even if they had been able to afford to; though there was no question of his staying long in that town, it would be a great comfort to his mother, now that her health was failing, to have him somewhere in their own country which she understood, in which she could picture to herself his daily life. Fortunately he did not have to explain to her the reason for his return. She hoped that in part, perhaps unconsciously, he had been drawn back to Wisconsin by love of more than one kind, and that when she and his father let him go again, they would have to give up Muriel Pater as well. This girl had already been called his sweetheart when they were children, and soon after he had gone abroad and his parents moved to Woodland,

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had got employment there in the lumber company's offices. Mrs. Redd told her son what a pleasure it had been for them to reread together all of her letters and part of Muriel's, evidently drawing her own conclusions from the fact that the girl skipped paragraphs or entire pages.

Life had made him a gift of this girl. Originally he had loved her for her sympathy, that is, loved himself through her as well as in other ways. After he went abroad he had written, every week, not perfectly truthful records of his feeling, but love-letters of the man he hoped to become to the girl he would have chosen; a sensitive needle must have some pole to turn to. Then, having addressed so many pages to his own idealism, he dreaded seeing the real Muriel again. But she had profited by every phrase, imitated every compliment, prepared herself to meet strange expectations. Failing to love her now would be unfaithfulness not only to her, but to a work of his imagination.

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Hubert Redd looked out of the window, then brought a pile of scores out of his bedroom and put them on the piano, but went back to the window. The ten-year-old town lay open to the autumn forest; in any direction he could see a bit of its torn unclean edge. The river, already swollen, completely covered the dam; it was discolored by sawdust. Hubert was not used to seeing Scandinavian faces, red uneven foreheads and pale eyes which pointed nowhere. All of it somehow suggested crime; he did not know whether that was because it was the setting of a certain type of motion picture or because of the wreckage of exploitation everywhere: a sort of slaughter-house, stumps and stumps and prostrate branches, a festering of weeds where there must have been clean ferns and club moss, the evil effect heightened by the bright colors of the season, red branches in a slaughter-house. And the wood still bleeding gently in four-square piles was not fine enough for musical instruments or any other

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beautiful use; summer bungalows, endless copies of the ugliest imaginable chair, newspaper. . .

When he sailed from France he had believed it to be for a short visit only. Then he had thought eagerly of his parents' new home. The northern forest, scarcely hunted in, astir with large birds, echoing purely with an unwritten, unknown sonority; every sight, even the wild stags and the young bears in the rhythmic foliage, would mean sound; he would work under a spell, and to cover the ruled paper he had brought along would come a jet of free, clear, clean music. As a matter of fact, since he had been at home, he had not seen anything extraordinary or heard anything but song-sparrows; instead there were whistles and wheels, the harsh feverish purring of the dam, the saws' incessant scream, low at the start like something in the bone behind one's ear, rising to a hideous note, choking on it and fading down the

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scale, over and over all day long; and he had no lofty sentiments about machines.

In any case, the fact that he might have to stay on indefinitely in America gave him so much to think about that he could not expect himself to work at once. His patron, instead of sending the usual quarterly check, had suggested a visit home, offering to pay his expenses—later chuckling over this trick. Hubert had accepted, the ocean fare had come and he had taken the earliest second-class boat.

Upon his arrival in Chicago he had telephoned to Mr. Crawley's offices and been given an appointment. As he had stepped out of the elevator a bald young man waiting beside the door marked Private had beckoned him down the corridor, one finger on his lips. "I am Mr. Graver, the secretary. You remember me, we met in Paris. How are you? Come with me a minute."

He had hurried him into another elevator and out of it into a booth in an ice-cream

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parlor on the first floor. "Excuse me for seizing upon you. I wanted to tell you—it is only fair—besides, it may help you. Of course you must realize, in spite of whatever has happened, that Mr. Crawley is a splendid man, kindly, open-minded, and idealistic, and he is very fond of you. You have been perhaps—I do not say certainly—indiscreet, not so far as he is concerned, I mean toward Mrs. Crawley. Indeed there has been some discussion between them on the subject, and she once took me into her confidence to the extent of asking me to use my slight influence on her side. I may tell you, between you and me, that Mr. Crawley has also been indiscreet. She has a jealous nature ——"

Hubert had had time to wonder if the strangely amiable young man was deranged, but not—in the stream of obscure phrases uttered in a frivolous but melancholy tone, scanned by gestures with a handkerchief and rapid glances here and there—to put in a phrase of his own.

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"Very jealous—and when she returned from Europe this last time there were, about the house you understand, certain tell-tale objects; one or two malicious gossips in Oak Park where they live also did their work—Mr. Crawley admitted as much to me personally—and of course she was then in a position to demand anything she wanted. She wanted your head; just like Salome in the opera if I may say so; indeed I think she went abroad this last time with that in mind."

"You must be mistaken, Mr. Graver. Mrs. Crawley was particularly kind to me last June. I went with her everywhere and she asked me to introduce my friends to her."

"Oh no, worse luck, I am not mistaken. I hoped you would understand better than you do." He glanced at his wrist-watch. "Now you must hurry up to the office. These are delicate matters."

"I am late already," Hubert had said irritably.

"No, you are not late. I gave you an ap-

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pointment ten minutes before Mr. Crawley would be free, hoping to have a word with you. Now if there is ever anything I personally can do for you . . ."

Hubert had been ushered into the great, shaded inner room: thick green carpet, mahogany and plump leather, Whistler etchings on the walls, a fireplace full of gilt leaves. The great banker, flushed, with unusually liquid eyes, would have been handsome if his face had matured as it had aged; he had that gentle nervousness which often accompanies business men's diseases, but on this occasion had not risen from the least luxurious chair in the room.

"Young man," he had said, "I have no questions to ask you. This is unpleasant for us both. But if you will be patient and not interrupt me, you shall hear how things stand. Mrs. Crawley and I are unsatisfied with your behavior. It is not a question of music. We don't pretend to be competent to judge modern efforts along that line. The

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symphony concerts, Wagner and Beethoven, have meant a lot to us. We have a debt, and we like to pay somebody for what we enjoy. Leave that out of this. This has to do with character. I didn't want to dictate all this to my stenographers."

He had spoken coldly but uneasily. "Do me justice. I paid your passage back." It was then that he had chuckled. "I saw no reason why you should deprive Mrs. Crawley over there of the credit that is due her for the interest she has taken in you. By getting somebody else to take care of you, I mean, temporarily. We sent you over there. Now we are back where we began."

He had hurried over the words which followed. "Now, my boy, that is the last financial assistance you are to expect. It has gone on long enough. Two years it's been, hasn't it? Mind you, I am not speaking of your work. It is probably very fine. I don't pretend to be a connoisseur . . ."

Unreasonable as one may be on such occa-

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sions, Hubert kept thinking: this means that I shall never meet Stravinsky, what I wanted most, my last chance. Nothing helped him to give it up: neither what he had heard about his disposition, his earnest malice and locked Russian courtesy, nor the fact that only imitation musicians made an object of such meetings, nor the possibility that instead of playing himself the great man might ask him to and that his hard attention like that of a bird with a powerful brain, a bird out of the *Arabian Nights*, might let him know that all he had done was bad; no matter what happened, for he felt sure that there were in himself resources which he had not been able to open up and only wished for something or someone to break through to them, to tear as it were a certain membrane, to remove an obstruction in his imagination's speech; and at the first-night of the "Odipus" oratorio, when all magnificent-looking Paris had listened as if to a poorly performed revival of Händel or Rossini, after it was over, on the

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steps of the dirty old theater, there had come to his eyes tears rather of exasperated desire than of emotion roused by the masterpiece with its rigidity of extreme sentiments lacking tears . . .

"Now I sent you regularly," Mr. Crawley had continued, "a good living. In fact, Mrs. Crawley when she was in Paris learned, and from friends of yours, that the same amount would have supported two artists. She might have had two chances in the lottery, she said. But that wasn't enough for your luxurious tastes. My wife learned that you have been accepting money as well from young Mrs. Jack Rohan. I have had business dealings with her husband. I don't want to be misunderstood. I mean to speak to him about this matter. Don't worry, I shall be strictly fair. Apparently she makes quite a business of patronizing. Apparently she dropped one of her young poets for your benefit. He has my sympathy."

Hubert had had an impression that the

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financier was trying to remember things he had been told to say, to take the place of something he was not going to speak of.

"Now we have no objection," he had said, "to your writing something when you feel inclined, provided it's along musical lines. But if you do a thing, do it well. The same young poet told my wife that a very important editor—you know his name if I don't, a greater man than you are, you must admit—had turned down your criticisms because they were laughable and because your dealings were so underhanded."

Hubert had begun to pay less attention to what his benefactor said than to the people he mentioned, the confused memories which corresponded one by one to the articles of his denunciation: the light-hearted woman who had provided him with costly scores and some unnecessary clothes; the great theorist and editor, incessant anecdotes in a voice like a flute, a virile bearded body somewhere in the center of which the malice of an old Massa-

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chusetts woman sat in judgment; the young California poet, eight of whose verses he had memorized: phantoms merely set in motion in cafés and studios and revolutionary concerts but who had their real life here in the West at his heels. And a strange fear, keyless and meterless and with great round notes, a sort of choir of cryptic accusations, of secrets which at any moment might swell enough to be heard by anyone who was interested, began to make him shrink down in the overstuffed chair; he had forgotten that Paris and Chicago were suburbs one of the other; and only politeness toward the aging gentleman to whom he had to be grateful for the finest things in his life had kept him from putting his fingers in his ears. . .

"There was even worse talk about Paris than this. Mrs. Crawley was shocked. I find it very disagreeable to speak of it at all. I do not wish to ask you any questions. Some of the company you keep is evidently the worst. People get degenerate from having

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too much time on their hands. Young men and women with very morbid minds—I am surprised they are not in sanatoriums. Sensation hunters, decadents, there is no doubt of it. I am not accusing you of anything. Mrs. Crawley did not care to hear. That is strictly your business." He raised his head and his mellow voice grew proud like a public speaker's. "But we people in the West don't need to ask for information. We draw our own conclusions. We can afford to. Even if we do make mistakes."

Hubert wondered why he had not risen some time before. "Mr. Crawley, I will say good-bye. I thank you for all that you have done for me. Please remember me respectfully to Mrs. Crawley. I am going to Wisconsin tonight."

"That is the place for you. Home to your father. A simple old-fashioned home. I may be a rich man, but I have reverence, a genuine reverence, for poverty. Maybe I am to blame for having accustomed you to a life

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of idleness. Please believe that I meant well. My love of music led me astray."

Apparently by this time he believed every word of his indictment. "My boy, you have had things too easy." His voice broke slightly; his eyes were suffused with a glistening pinkness. "Let me tell you, the most wonderful thing in life is to make sacrifices. For your duty and your honor. And sacrifices to your family. I shall go on doing it. Don't you regret your life over there abroad. Let me tell you, there is nothing in it. Do take responsibility now and settle down. And try to be grateful to Mrs. Crawley and me, even if we can't see our way clear to helping you any more."

"Mr. Crawley, good-bye. I must go, if you please."

The excited man had not seemed to want him to, but he had looked content and tired out. He had also had the lost look which all martyrs to duty and domestic affection have when they are alone.

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In the corridor Hubert had shivered involuntarily, though his mingled pity and dread of his benefactor had been a warmer emotion than any he had felt before. He had seen but pretended not to see Mr. Graver, feeling like a small boy who dares not relax his throat lest the sounds aching in it be unmanly. He had taken the first train north; it had seemed appropriate to his distress to sit up all night. At that time he had firmly intended to write Mrs. Jack Rohan an account of the rupture and a direct request to help him return to Paris.

As soon as he got home he had written to the old woman who, as his teacher, had presented him to the Crawleys; unperturbed, she had replied with an offer of a position in the music department of a small college south of Milwaukee. He was still putting off the letter to Mrs. Rohan, perhaps out of desire to avoid knowing if Mr. Crawley's accusations had reached her ears or, childishly, to keep the possibility of her help as a refuge for his

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thought, when disheartenment went too far. Something was happening to him in the north; it was not inspiration; it was not love, though Muriel wove around him the spell of hers, never foolish, never tactless, disheartened by nothing . . .

His mother came into the room. "I met your girl down-town, and she asked me to tell you that she is coming over about one o'clock. It's Saturday, you know, so she's free." She made a more tidy pile of his music on the piano. "I've been thinking . . . It seems to me you're not quite so cheerful after you've been with her."

"Silly mother. She is my dearest friend in the world."

"That may be. Friendship isn't love." She put her hands on his shoulders. "Look here, son. You mustn't let us railroad you into marrying her if, in your heart of hearts . . . It's hard for mothers and sweethearts, you know, to put themselves in another's place. Muriel is a dear daughter to

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me. But I only want you to be happy. And I hope she loves you no less than that."

At the end of the noonday meal, there Muriel stood in the doorway: moderate beauty, womanly, white, and healthy, blue-clad. For some reason, though she was only twenty-six, her hair was turning; it was like a silver-fox pelt and almost too fine to be pleasant to touch. "Here am I, the lumberjack." She sank into the chair nearest the piano. "Mrs. Redd, look the other way. I'm going to smoke."

They sat there and said nothing of importance. She knew why he had come home and urged him to write to Mrs. Rohan, even to the Dutch ambassador's wife at whose concerts his best work had been played; but so bitter was her fear of being left behind again that her voice grew unnaturally ardent and low. Under her placid eyebrows her eyes, small and pure in color, obstinate and sweet, never left his face. He was ill at ease; he could not wish for her to stay all afternoon,

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though he tried, and charged himself with innate coldness. But a few days before she had said, "I know that your feeling is not comparable to mine, but, Hubert, so little of your love would be enough . . ." Between one and another went something that resembled a violin string which an invisible finger incessantly stroked and made to vibrate—a fretful monotone of love weakly sustained. Hubert listened, listened, could hear only that, and could not hear the future say a thing.

His mother came into the room. "You must play all your best pieces for Muriel. I'll sit out on the porch and listen."

Muriel was grateful not to have had to ask. Hubert adjusted the swivel stool and opened the keyboard. He wished Muriel would not put out her cigarette and clasp her hands. He played five extremely brief two-part sonatas, the material of the first not only varied in the second according to the tradition, but made to accompany a new phrase

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and its development. The outworn piano frightened him, but he played well enough: nude, fresh, percussive sound. Between the third and the fourth outside the window the creak of his mother's rocking-chair stopped and deep breathing began; later she retired to the back of the house. Muriel closed her eyes and her eyelids fluttered.

Hubert stood up. She did so as well, and rested her hands and chin on the poor old instrument. "They are beautiful, beautiful. As beautiful as Mozart—that's what you like best, isn't it? I can't tell you how much they mean to me. Your mother went to sleep; they ought not to be played in Wisconsin. I think Paris must be like them, phenomenal, exotic, all in a certain style and almost painful. Even Debussy is not as strange . . ." She spoke with a touching effort.

Then Hubert saw all their faults. Only self-consciousness kept him from hunting out the manuscript and tearing it up. Was this not mere perversity—to react to excessive

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and loving praise with disparagement of himself? Would her appreciation always make him detest what he had done? Perhaps it was a way of making her responsible for his weak work, for his weakness in general. He was ashamed of himself. He kissed her pale forehead.

Then he said, "I want to go for a walk in the woods now." He spoke a little bluntly; it was imperative to be alone.

"You mean that you don't want me along?"

"Forgive me. I have thought of a song and I want to think about it some more." The classic lie. . .

He went upstairs after his father's rifle; he might bring home something to eat. He heard Muriel call, "Mrs. Redd, our young man is going out composing. In the woods. I'll take a nap and then help get supper if I may stay."

"Keep the big hills to the right on your way along, and to the left coming back, and

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you won't get lost," his mother replied from somewhere.

"You look very desperate with your gun," Muriel said.

"Can you see me desperate? I might make better music if I were."

While he was in sight she was watching him. As usual, he was trying to make up his mind what to do; he did not believe in resigning himself to circumstances. Composers never made a living wage—all the opulence, century after century, going to the performers—but there was no use in his trying to give concerts: his hands were the wrong shape, too much like those of St. Cecilia over the piano, and in general he was not sturdy enough to stand touring and did not enjoy public appearances enough to make capital of fatigue, nerves, and fever, as many of the young Slavs did. There was no cheap leisure in America; he had no desire even to hear the music that could be made out of weary living, aspiration, scraps of time, his own or

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anyone else's. And in a Western music school he would lose himself in a swarm of mediocre youngsters, envying them their age; and honor would oblige him to offer them the principles that other musicians had proved to be true rather than those he had hoped to add to the number, and to prefer their first efforts to his last . . .

Forlornly he had put off writing to Mrs. Rohan in order not to risk his last chance, not to gamble on reality with his last illusion, until now it had become habitual to lack the courage to do so; he wondered how much or how little she cared about music or about him, remembering her zest for novelty, her timidity in any dispute (and by this time Mr. Crawley would have had his word with her husband), her Western accent and soft voice like that of a Michigan Boulevard pigeon; she forgot like a Parisian and like an American; he had been but a three days' wonder and it was some one else's turn. All over, done for. If he had in him the makings of

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a great musician (and there had never been great music in America) it was a pity; if not, what did it matter to anyone but himself?

Meanwhile he had made his way into the forest by a rough road, among softening stumps on which superb, discolored funguses fed, over chips and broken limbs, the town gradually slipping behind groups of large trees which had been spared and behind feathery thickets of new growth; the autumn not only unrolling softly from north to south in the sky, speckled with birds also going south, but signing itself everywhere—a wash of blues between him and the range of hills, marks brightly painted on the small vegetation, a mere look of weariness in the tall hemlocks. Presently he turned down a pathway where logs must have been dragged along, then down another, avoiding the clearings; it was the deep untouched forest, if there was any left, which he sought, feeling newly stripped of every rare quality himself—and of that which is commonplace only the primi-

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tive seemed to have any enchantment, dignity, or peace. . .

If only he had been, if he could have resigned himself to be, a mere young man not driven by ambition, not elected or self-appointed to a special destiny, not overwrought with one talent! Personally, his hopes of becoming a musician set aside, he would not regret Paris. The first winter, wet and dim, when so far as he was concerned the crowds had been nameless to the last illustrious or ratlike man; a city as plain and august as the pots in the Orient out of which flowering plants are supposed to spring before one's eyes, with boulevards of secretive luxury, with dank honeycombs to live in and hoarse janitors keeping watch, with warm meeting-places of innumerable foreigners, with apparent folly and semblances of eccentric scholarship; the dream-Paris of Gerard de Nerval who was hanged on a lamp-post, and his own first spring there coming on like a fever, like love: then and only then it had

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seemed all prodigy and allurement. But promptly this ideal nightmare resolved itself into reasonable elements; he began to profit as a musician by Paris and, as a human being, to pay for the strict sobriety of its attention to the arts and the invaluable loneliness of the foreign artist in the close-packed, intelligent crowd. He learned to know its penury of tenderness, its need or craving for narcotics, apostasies, and revolutions in dumb-show; the pleasures flavored with piety and remorse; the deceptive wit of its great men, the irresponsible skill devoted to manipulating youth; the aristocratic combinations of bankruptcy with extravagance, the complex parasitism (Hubert realized that he was accusing his friends as his patron had accused him), the shamelessness without candor, the skepticism of panic underlying brilliant opinions. The more tolerance, the less warm enthusiasm—or so it seemed. A banquet table at which, on the whole, one goes hungry for the sake of certain foods; a little nourish-

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ment and many drugs—such is the world's hospitality. Nevertheless, Hubert resolved to write Mrs. Rohan that night about returning to Paris.

So he went along through the woods carrying his gun, but when he saw two or three partridges like dwarfs in brocade and aigrettes walking and talking to each other, he could not take aim in time, the sight of them too pleasing to leave him any presence of mind. Where the sun made its way between branches both of tree and cloud, grew small rough flowers covered with bees; juniper spread out its great crowns of fur and wire and berries; and having walked a long way, he came upon strong-smelling, swampy hollows. The growth was dense, but he was not satisfied; for here and there he came upon stumps or ominous marks of the axe on mature trees, and his path still seemed to have a destination. He said to himself that he did not like this country because it was merely in the process of becoming what other coun-

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tries were perfectly. Would not staying there, for any such craftsman or inventor as a musician, be perversely going back to the beginning instead of starting where others had left off?

But if he stayed, he added, and taught in a college, the anxiety which his feeling for Muriel had turned into would be brought to an end. Her love that was or was not his creation, his love with its attendant ideal of himself which he surely had created, detail by detail like a piece of music—he did not know what to do with them, and in Europe would never know. He loved her, but did not need her. In the life of a music-teacher in Wisconsin, need, compound and constant, would supplant all the other emotions.

All the way along, his over-sensitive ear of its own accord had gathered up and disentangled and, as it were, commented upon the innumerable sounds of the forest; now, fascinated, he began to be unable to withhold his entire attention, began almost to suffer

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from them: great sagging clusters of vague tones, a slumbering, tossing, and sighing in slumber, sound for the eye as well as the ear —he heard but did not see sluggish currents of autumn and short ripples with which winter was beginning, and amid wind and wood, other leaves and small echoes, saw but could not hear the arpeggio of a maple hand sweeping the width of some stringed instrument— a beak beating on hollow wood, the senseless rhythm of his feet crumpling leaves, breaking twigs, and an increasing vibration high in key of marsh insects some distance off, less and less far off; all this palpitating mass of marrying, dividing notes seeming to lead up to something and then breaking down of its own weight; suddenly the long, watery, overripe phrase of some bird . . . It was music, all too musical, but of a style which was passing—too closely related to too many sounds, too far removed from easy speech and tragic outcry both.

Hubert thought that he was approaching a clearing. Instead he came out on the shores

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of a lake. Pale, very little rippled, it lay under slopes and bulky trees. Its breath was cold. Its vast extent made an almost complete silence. The shore was swathed in tawny thickets, the shallows full of reeds, but there was a firm water's edge. Hubert amused himself by following it. He jumped from one solid piece of sod to another, as softly as he could in order to hear the little sigh of roots, bubbles, and soil under him. He did not care if he got his feet wet. Lest his gun get caught in the brush and overhanging branches, he pointed it ahead. Perhaps he might see a pair of sunfish close to land. He would have to go round a small bay . . .

Suddenly an enormous bird sprang up in front of him. Very close, pale wings thrashing, long neck outthrust—that was all he saw. Terribly startled, he shot it. It broke down into the water, dragging itself away. He dropped his gun and stood with his arms out as if he were going to fall on his hands and knees. He could not see it; a bush in

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the water covered it up. There was a terrific splashing. Then it screamed. He had thought they were dumb, all the swans, he had thought they were dumb. The scream went on and changed and did not stop. In despair at dying, it whistled, whistled, and took its breath. Broken open, a heavy stream of music let out—but it was the opposite of music. Now husky, now crude, what were like clots of purity often, the rhythm of something torn. Greater beating of the wings, greater agony of the splashes, whipping, kicking. He was being made to hear what it would have been insufferable to see. Sudden silence. The water was dirty and red.

Hubert squatted on the wet shore and began to cry, but stopped because the sound of his voice was ludicrous. He did not want to see what was left of the swan. It was mere fright that had made him kill it; but if he had not been frightened he would not have heard its cries. He felt a sick satisfaction, definite jealousy of the dead bird, an extreme feebleness, a great haste.

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He picked up the gun because it was his father's, and hurried home. Wisconsin had changed; it had become the scene of what had just happened. He would be held there by magnetism, that sometimes exercised by trysting place or tomb, about which, almost content with his apparent loss, the lover wanders in hope of some ghost with relaxed plumage and forgotten voice; that exercised, for men who love themselves, by the spots marked with a cross where something they once were fell dead. Well then, he would stay—but not to express his native land in music. He would make them hear what it would be either unendurable to experience or on earth impossible to find. Or he would hold his peace—a dumb, wholesome, personal peace. Talk about Paris, who cared, who cared? . . . That night he accepted the offer of the college in the south of the state, and agreed with Muriel to be married at once.

THE END

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